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Seeking the Christian Way in Difficult Times

BY FRED SHERMAN BUSCHMEYER

I

THESE are days in which thoughtful people want to think and speak and act as directly to the point as possible. Many people are already painfully aware of the fact that the goal of their desire is far from easy of attainment.

In the first place, we know that we are living in a world of such partisanship, conflict and disintegration of old standards of honor that truth in any objective, scientific sense has long since ceased to be the fundamental basis of either information or action so far as many of the most significant events and issues of our day are concerned. This constitutes a tremendous handicap to any and all who would think and act in these critical times in the interests and in the name of a God of truth.

Like a man approaching a deadly area of quicksand, we need to stand a good way back before we can be sure that we are on the solid ground of factual accuracy or anything approaching a full, objective regard for truth. Partisanship and propaganda not only befog the atmosphere about us; they make spongy and insecure the very ground on which we stand as citizens of secular states.

In the second place, we know from experience that when we care intensely and deeply about a particular issue, even though truth and accuracy are at hand to serve us, our very intensity of concern is apt to circumscribe and limit our vision. There is such concentration in our desire to proceed practically, and at once, to the heart of things that we are apt to be deficient in both the scope of our knowledge and the perspective of our understanding. We become like the proverbial person who could not see the forest for the trees. We need to learn a lesson from the student of art who discovers that it is necessary and important for him to stand back

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some distance from a painting if he would come to understand its true significance.

II

These possibilities and dangers need to be very much in our minds as we meditate on the subject, "Seeking the Christian Way in Difficult Times." The "seeking of a way" certainly connotes a desire for action, movement and progress. The seeking of a "Christian way," however, introduces some very real conditioning factors for the quest. Without attempting to dodge for one moment the difficulties of our times, we do need to recognize that the seeking of a Christian way—the desire for Christian ends—does bring us two perspectives which might otherwise be lacking in our approach to the fundamental problems and issues of our day.

Such a "Christian" quest reminds us immediately that in these difficult times there are many people in our own country as well as elsewhere who seek a solution of world tensions on the basis of views, concerns and methods that are not centered in "Christian" faith and conviction. This is a point of great significance for us to recognize and understand, both for our present approach to world problems and for the results that may be expected or hoped for when current "ways" or techniques for facing our present difficulties have run their courses and have begun to produce their fruits. It is a fact that brings us to the direct concern of our meditation this morning, "Christianity and our civilization." What is their relationship? Does the downfall of one mean the death of the other?

Many of us have become so accustomed to thinking loosely and carelessly of Christianity—the Christian way—as so nearly synonymous with contemporary Western culture, that it may require considerable emotional as well as intellectual discipline for us to bring ourselves to the point where, consciously and deliberately, we face and recognize the very real differences between Christianity and its ways and contemporary culture and its ways. Christianity and Western civilization, even as expressed in our democratic states, are not the same thing either in theory or in fact; and no amount of emotional desire to justify certain acts or to continue certain familiar customs and procedures can make them synonymous. There are several points at which we need to be on the alert to guard against confusion.

The tolerance, or indifference, of a democracy which allows for wide divergencies of religious conviction or for the complete lack of any religious convictions without constant and open conflict, must not be mistaken for a recognized and agreed upon common "Christian" understanding and loyalty. The fact that there is a larger degree of Christian influence manifested in the structure of many of our social institutions than has ever been manifested elsewhere before, should not blind us to the fact that vast numbers of our people do not turn to the Christian gospel either for personal or social motivation and guidance in facing life and in struggling for what they hope to achieve in life.

Neither should a just pride in our relatively high social, political or economic achievements mislead us into equating these institutions or practices with a full expression of the Christian ethic. This is the first perspective that the seeking of a Christian way brings to our minds.

The second perspective which comes as a natural corollary to the truth of our first realization, is this: The disruption of Western civilization as we have known it does not mean the death and extinction of the power and the truth of the Christian gospel, nor the end of opportunity and responsibility for those who have pledged the loyalty and the strength of their lives to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Indeed, however great the tragedy, loss and discomfort attendant upon the disruption of Western civilization as we have known it—and we will do well to recognize that the foundations of the old order are already largely gone—whatever the outcome of further military clash and conquest, the fact remains that, in terms of serving the Christian spirit and ideal, we are entering an era fraught with creative opportunity and demands for human spirits grounded in the truth, understanding and disciplines of the Christian gospel that produced the best that we have known in the old order and that will still be the hope of the world when the brightness of the new day has reached its sunset time.

To begin to lay hold of an understanding, and to cultivate those inner disciplines which shall make us the instruments of God for the further revelation of his truth and power to save both individuals and civilizations, is, it seems to me, the fundamental challenge and responsibility of the Christian church at the present moment.

III

Walter Marshall Horton, in a significant volume that has recently appeared, suggests a cycle of religious growth that can help us begin to understand the possibilities before us. Out of a broad study of both Oriental and Occidental religious history Dr. Horton comes to the conclusion that there is a definite pattern marking the power and influence of religion in the life of various civilizations. In their relationship to their cultural environments the great religions of mankind have left a pattern involving three recurring phases.

First, there has been a period of religious intensity marked by a comparative cultural crudity. Second, there has been a period of continued religious vitality marked by a great cultural creativity. And then has followed a period of religious inertia marked by cultural sophistication and secularism.

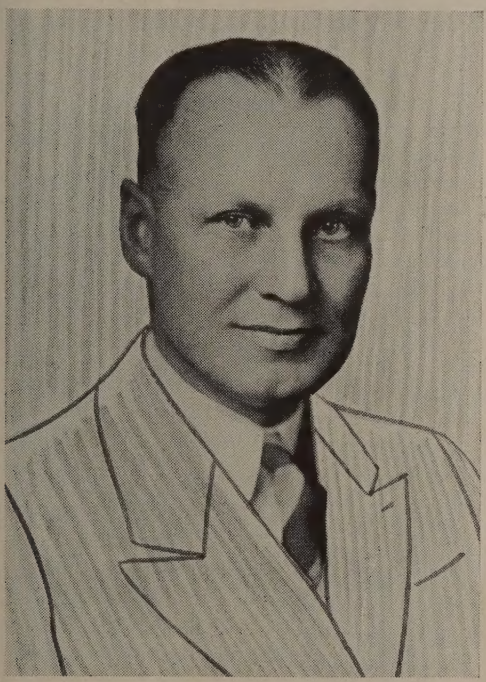
Interesting as it is to trace this development in the life of the Orient, our attention turns naturally to consider how Christianity has grown and survived in its relationship with the successive civilizations or cultural epochs of our Western world. It takes only a little thought to see the pattern unfold in our own religious and cultural history.

The religion of Jesus of Nazareth, the carpenter's son, and the spirit which was caught from him by his first-century followers, was unquestionably marked by both a deep intensity and power, and a comparative

cultural crudity as viewed by the economic, intellectual and political leaders of the age. Culturally crude though first-century Christianity was in the eyes of the defenders of the status quo, it did possess an inner drive and intensity, and a transforming power in the lives of individual men and women.

There came the day when by reason of weaknesses within and aggressive forces without the Roman State began to go to pieces, and it was nothing other than the creative drive and power of the growing Christian spirit that brought to the Western world a new cohesive and molding force and influence that built a new order out of the ashes of the old.

But having given its power and spirit so completely



Fred Sherman Buschmeyer

to the creation of a new cultural environment, the church, which was the visible body of the Christian spirit in the world, began to take on so much of the secular interest and the cultural sophistication of the age that it lost its creative power to change life in terms of its original ideal.

Then men might well have said, as some no doubt did say: "Christianity is through. It has no power to lift life to higher levels." And had there been nothing more to Christianity than its externals the point would have been well taken. But at the heart of the Christian gospel there is a message of redemption through the power of an eternal living Spirit. That message will not down and cannot permanently be concealed or corrupted by institutions or organizations of material power and might. Such institutions may fail. The church itself as a visible institution may collapse or be forced to change its external functions. But the spirit and the power at the heart of Christianity are greater than the successes or the failures of institutions peculiar to any culture or any civilization.

As a demonstrated fact in history, the Christian spirit arose in new purity and power through what we know in Protestantism as the Reformation and in less dramatic way in the counter-reformation within the Roman Catholic Church.

The new Christianity was, once more, of humble ways but of deep spiritual intensity as compared with the pomp of the institutions about it. But it carried a creative power, a new faith and depth of personal conviction, that broke the bonds of the dying order and once more shaped the thinking and the building of a new civilization. New freedom for the individual and for the nation sprang from the creative power of the freed Christian spirit, and our modern Western civilization achieved its greatest strength and values out of the contact of the revived Christian spirit with the problems of a spiritually decadent order.

In transforming the external order, however, the visible body of the church, across the last three centuries, has become "cultured" and "sophisticated" in terms of the secular order; and you and I have lived through days in which that culture and that sophistication have been unequal to the task of holding together and saving by an easy scientific evolutionary process what we have known as modern Western civilization. That secular order is already in the advanced stages of disintegration so far as Europe is concerned; and so far as our hopes and values are the same as Europe's, our old order of life, too, is passing.

IV

But the passing of an old order does not mean that God is impotent. The passing of a civilization does not mean the end of Christianity. In the beginning the Spirit of the Eternal beheld a chaotic void and brought forth a creative, growing order of life. The Spirit of God brooding upon the dark chaotic waters brought light and life into being. In the dark hours of an ancient civilization the Spirit of God moved upon the chaos of men and nations until a man came forth to live with new purity and power the eternal, creative truth and love of God within the framework of history.

Chaos and darkness may represent terrifying facts to us who face them for the first time in the life of our civilization. They are not new to God, the Eternal. From weaknesses within and strong forces without, the old order may pass away so far as familiar external forms are concerned. But for those whose lives are hid with Christ in God, whose faith is in the Eternal, whose highest good is to do the will of the God who gave them life, these are but the days to prepare our hearts and minds that by his grace our lives may yet become the channels for his redemptive Spirit to move once more with creative power upon our troubled world.

O God, who, from the ancient Dark
  Brought forth a world of light;
From out our lives in this dark hour
  Call forth the grace thou gavest in Christ—
That we may make incarnate, now,
  The saving truth of thy great power.

We Answer Today's Challenge

By Everett W. Palmer

I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth. Romans 1:26.

THE darkest tragedy of the New Testament was not the nails that soldiers drove into the hands and feet of Jesus; it was the nails his friends drove into his heart. It is not what happened on the hill outside Jerusalem; it is what happened in the garden outside the upper room. The saddest words of the Bible are not "and they crucified him," but these, "and they all forsook him and fled." When it became dangerous to follow Jesus, when the mob and the soldiers came, when loyalty meant the risk of life, then his most trusted friends forsook him and fled—fled into a night made the more dark and terrible with their treachery. They lived to remember that night with shame and remorse beyond words. Poor Judas could not bear the burden of living with the thoughts of it. There is no cruelty to compare with the treachery of one's friends. There is no blacker sin than to prove traitor in time of crisis.

WHEN HYSTERIA WEAKENS MORALITY

That is our temptation. The roar of the mob is in the air. The clanking of the military grows stronger. The time is coming when it will be dangerous to remain in the company of Jesus. As ever before, old men are pounding drums and inventing devices which send young men to war. As ever before, hysteria is weakening morality and excuses are being found for savagery; the age-old lusts to hate and to kill are being hallowed in the name of patriotism. During the years that followed the First World War it was not risky for any of us to condemn the philosophy and methods of war and to proclaim the gospel of peace. In fact, that sort of thing has been rather popular. But it is out of fashion now. And if we haven't already discovered it, the days immediately before us are sure to be filled with danger for those who will stand with Jesus for the spirit and the practice of peace. We shall be sorely tempted to surrender our Christian morality, to lose faith in the gospel as the way for the world's redemption, to flee from Jesus, to make the darkness of this night even blacker with our own treachery.

Surely your resolve is the same as mine. Who wants the shame of the traitor forever on his soul! In our hearts we are prompted to say with Paul: "I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth."

Such a conviction will not allow us to be passive spectators of present-day events. We dare not stand idly by to let the forces of ignorance and sin rule the day—not when we affirm the Lordship of Christ. If we are not ashamed of the gospel, if we believe it is God's way for men and nations to live lest doom befall them, then we are required to act, and with all the courage, wisdom and strength our Lord can give us.

Certainly to act as Christians we are compelled to be the voice of God's judgment upon this war and upon America's program for getting into it.

A TREATY OF VINDICTIVENESS

Twenty years ago the triumphant Allies made a peace of revenge rather than of justice. After this nation helped win the war, her help to make lasting peace was repudiated. Nineteen of the twenty-three terms by which Germany laid down arms were flagrantly violated by the treaty which later was dictated by the victors. A British statesman since has properly described that transaction by saying that "seldom in the history of man has such vindictiveness cloaked itself in such unctuous sophistry." During the years which have followed, the church has pleaded with the nations at fault to correct the injustice done at Versailles. It has declared that unless correction be made the world would again be drawn into war and revolution. Now war has come. It is a harvest of sin sown in the Hall of Mirrors in the Palace of Versailles.

Since the First World War the church has been calling for disarmament. It has declared that armament competition creates the suspicion, hatred and unwillingness to arbitrate which cause war. It has said that the expense of this competition means intolerable privation for the common people and the economic ruin of the world. Four years after the Armistice of 1918, with Germany disarmed, the armament budget for the world was twice that of 1914, and by 1930 it was approximately three times increased over 1914. What is now happening, the church warned would happen. Nations have sown seeds. They now reap the harvest.

Throughout the past twenty-two years the church has been pleading with America to take the lead in establishing a new world order, a structure for international relations which would make possible a civilized world community; a world order in which nations would be obedient to a common law, with agencies adequate for the interpretation and enforcement of that law; a world order in which each nation would have equal access to markets and to raw materials, and in which there would be non-partisan control for tariffs and currency.

THE CHURCH AND WAR

The church has loudly declared that unless America and other nations were willing to make the intelligent efforts and sacrifices which a program for peace required they would again share the guilt of bringing the world into the suicidal ruin of war. Apparently the leaders of nations thought that advice "too idealistic." They preferred the kind of realism which causes them now to murder one another's children. This nation has preferred the kind of realism which now launches conscription and persuades many citizens to believe that our frontier is identical with that of the British Empire—citizens who once were opposed to this nation's taking any responsibility in world affairs for peace.

Long ago it was written, "Whatsoever a man sows that shall he also reap." The world today is suffering

om the inevitable law of the harvest. Upon this har-
st, with utter and terrible condemnation, rests the
dgment of God. What man, in the name of Christ,
n condone this war and America's preparation to get
to it! If we are not ashamed of the gospel, but be-
ve in it, then are we summoned, even as Amos was,
be the voice of God's judgment, that men may re-
nt and be saved.

Furthermore, an aggressive Christian program in
ese days requires not only condemnation of war, but
e provision of leadership for peace.

In order to keep America at even a semblance of
ace and to help lead the world to peace, it is im-
erative for us to keep alive the spirit and practice of

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emocracy in this nation. Though democracies are
led by majorities, they are saved by minorities. Let
merica silence the voices of those who do not agree
ith the majority, and she writes her funeral notice.
here must be freedom to think and freedom to ex-
ess thought, else panic and expediency rather than
ason and truth will decide the destiny of this nation.
nce panic and expediency get in the saddle, war and
aos will be the inevitable result. For the sake of
ace the followers of Jesus are called to dedicate
emselves to such thought and action as may best
aintain democracy in this land.

Even more urgent, those who choose to remain in the
mpany of Jesus must continue to petition our nation
turn from policies which promote the war and turn
policies which would aid in ending the war. No one
ill gain any good by the continuation of this war, not
en Germany. The end will be a bankrupt, starving
orld with people more desperate and bitter and fear-
ful than before. The victors will be among the losers in this war as in the last. Let us continue, despite the odds against us, to urge our nation to use her prestige and power to conciliate, to outline again a pattern for international life which can bring justice and peace. And, as Dr. Albert W. Palmer recently suggested, let us urge our nation to offer as a pledge of her good intentions the billions she plans to use for increased defense to be used instead to succor the distressed peoples of the world, to bind up their wounds and help re-establish their lives in the ways of peace. Such a program would be Christianity in action.

PAYING THE PRICE OF CONVICTIONS

Of course, so to labor for peace in these days will be dangerous. Hence, we must be resolved to pay whatever price our convictions require. We must be prepared to suffer for Christ's sake, even as our fathers suffered before us. The observation has often been made that those who transcend the accepted opinions and customs of their time are subjected to the same treatment as those who transgress. That is why, through the centuries, prophets and saints have often been treated as criminals. On the hill of Golgotha were three crosses. Two men were there because they had transgressed the law; the third was there because he had transcended the law. Jesus promised his followers the hatred and persecution of an alien world, and we may be sure that heritage was not canceled out by the close of the first century. In the days ahead, we can be quite sure that it will be dangerous to stand with Jesus. It may be that some of us will be asked to pay as dear a price for our loyalty as he paid.

But whatever the turn of events, and whatever the price our convictions will cost, let us keep our trust in God. It is he who can give us strength to endure what jeers, and curses, and hate, and cruelty the mob may inflict. It is he who can keep us from bitterness and from loss of faith in man when we must suffer. It is he who can enable us to keep on thinking and doing what is Christian—meeting evil with courageous goodness, hatred with resolute good will, falsehoods with unflinching truth—ready to enter the fellowship of his suffering rather than compromise or surrender our faith in "the power of the gospel."

There is a great inner peace and joy which comes to all those who refuse to desert Jesus. That is what sent our fathers of the faith into Roman stadiums to die with shining faces and a song on their lips. Even so it can be for us.

One of the scenes in all history that the world will not forget is that of Martin Luther standing trial for his life—a man in trouble because of his Christian convictions. The world has long ago forgiven Luther's shortcomings for the honesty and courage with which he stood alone to declare: "Here stand I, God helping me; I can do no other." With that kind of loyalty he was able to help lead the world from darkness to a new dawn. If we will meet the challenge of these days equally undaunted and unafraid, we too can help lead the world from darkness to a new and glorious dawn!

Has Religion Any Place In National Life?

By Herbert Booth Smith

And what great nation is there that hath statutes and ordinances so righteous as all this law? Only take heed to thyself and keep thy soul diligently, lest they depart from thy heart. Deuteronomy 4:8, 9.

THE setting of our text is very dramatic. It is part of an address given by Moses in the suburbs of the Promised Land. It is an impressive hour when you find yourself after long journeys in the neighborhood of your goal. Here the Israelites are encamped in the Plains of Moab, within sight of their place of rest, after the long sojourn in the wilderness. Moses is delivering the charge to the congregation, his immortal farewell address. He quotes history for the sake of its moral values, dwelling on the goodness of God and making it the basis of an appeal to the people to remember him and keep his commandments. It is a historical sermon on national religion.

We stand as a people today somewhat in the position of those assembled Jews. America too has come through a long journey, and for all we know may be in the suburbs of a "promised land" of much larger usefulness, if she would only take heed to herself and keep her soul diligently lest the ordinances of God depart from her heart.

The position of this pulpit is that the nation is a moral entity, just as much bound by the Ten Commandments and the Sermon on the Mount as any Christian here present today. The World War grew out of a denial of this position. The men who started it believed that a nation was too big for Sunday school and an empire too large for the Bible. Nice little Sunday school morals were all right for little girls but not for world statesmen in their great game of chess in which they played with the destinies of the world. Well now, we hold with John Milton that a nation is simply a huge individual and should behave itself accordingly. If any individual citizen begins to behave himself in an unseemly manner, we know what to do with him. Why not treat a nation the same way? Sir Edward Grey used to say that two nations should live side by side as two gentlemen whose estates adjoined. This conception is rapidly assuming authority among the thinkers of the world and we trust may some day be regarded as settled.

That is to say, a nation can sin and a nation can repent. The war of 1914 was not caused merely by the murder of the Austrian archduke, nor by German ambitions in the Near East, nor because aristocracy would crush socialism. All these causes were there, but back of them all was sin. A nation can't sin and get away with it any more than an individual can.

Some years ago the Bishop of Chelmsford, preaching in St. Paul's, London, took occasion to enumerate some of the sins of the nations, of which he said they must repent if they were to be used as instruments in God's hand. Russia would be held to account for her persecution of the Jews; Belgium would pay because of her treatment of the Congo natives; France would have to settle for her overthrow of God and religion; and England would have difficulty in explaining to the Almighty her forcing of the opium traffic on China, her failure to interfere when Armenians were being massacred, her Sabbath desecration, and so forth.

Here is the strange fact: Men will shun to do things as individuals which they condone as members of a nation. The state seems to them a great umbrella under which they can hide from the eye of God. Out here in the open plain, of course, God can see. Out there in the sunshine the Ten Commandments hold, but under the umbrella the law of Satan and his imps holds sway. It is a childish idea, isn't it? and would be laughable except that it is so tragic. Years ago, when three sovereigns divided up Poland, they placed themselves on the same moral level with three burglars who would crack a safe and divide up the contents among themselves. They wouldn't have done the latter out in the sunshine, but they did do the former under the umbrella of national necessity. Thank God, we're going to carry the laws of God out from under the umbrella one of these days and tell them to sprout and make the nation bring forth fruits meet for repentance.

On the brow of the hill overlooking the bay where the Mayflower was moored, a colossal statue has been reared. On the four corners of the pedestal repose four figures representing law, morality, freedom and education. But they are not the supreme figures. Above them stands erect the gigantic form of Faith. Her foot rests on a slate of Plymouth Rock while her head rises thirty-six feet in the air, her brow bound with evergreen laurels. With one hand she grasps an open Bible, while with the other in graceful gesture she points the nation up to God. That statue is true to the spirit of the Mayflower pilgrims. This republic was founded in the Christian faith and in devotion to Almighty God, and only with his blessing can it endure.

I

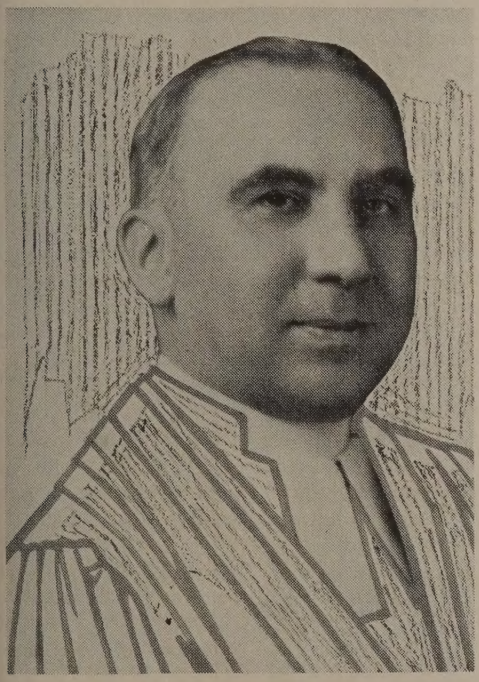
May I direct your attention first of all to the proposition that God is interested in the history of nations; and second, to the thought that nations ought to be interested in God and his Kingdom?

You won't have any difficulty in convincing the man who knows his Old Testament of the fact that God watches the march of nations with great interest, for that Book is full of it. The Old Testament God was really quite a statesman. It is only in the New Testament that the God of the individual is fully revealed by our Lord Jesus Christ. It is the God of the state we know in the ancient oracles, for the unit of Jewish life was not the person but the nation. The blessings promised by the prophets were national blessings, and the individual participated in them only because he was a member of the blessed community. God couldn't be bothered, so to speak, with the sparrow's fall or counting the hairs of your head; he had to give his time to bigger things—the course of empire and the rise and fall of dynasties.

Read some of the ancient prophets and you will see

hat to them nationality is a divine fact. Read Amos nd he sounds like a predecessor of Cromwell in Eng- and and Mazzini in Italy. Hear him: he represents God as saying: "Have I not brought Israel out of the and of Egypt and the Philistines from Caphtor?" You et the same idea in Isaiah. Cromwell felt that English istory was just as much a manifestation of God as vas the history of the Jews, for he said, "We are a eople that have had a stamp upon them from God."

Now all this is pre-eminently true, it seems to me, of he history of America. If God's hand is evident on the istory of other peoples, surely it is doubly so on ours. Go back before there was any United States—even to he ships of Columbus—and see if the all-seeing eye was



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atching them. One historian says that there are few t ings in the history of maritime discovery more won- rful than the incident by which the career of Colum- s was directed to the tropical regions of America. e was standing on a course which would have landed m in Florida, whence he might easily have been borne to Virginia. Perplexed and anxious as he was, he elded to the advice of Pinzon and bore up from the uthwest. Pinzon said to him: "It seems to me like an spiration that my heart dictates to me that we ought steer in a different direction." Pinzon had seen a ck of birds headed southwest and this apparently cided him. This simple incident deflected the stream Spanish colonization to Central America and left north free for the English. Look at Central and uth America and Mexico today and then say a new ayer of thanksgiving to God who turned the prow that ship that day in 1492, so that it would not in- fere with some other ships that were to come in 1607 and 1621, carrying from another land people who had laid hold of a new concept of government.

God and Columbus must have been friends, for Columbus in his journal speaks of "the means to be taken for the conversion of the natives to Christianity"; but at the same time God and the Pilgrims were friends, and North America was saved rather for Protestant than for Roman Christianity. "Every enterprise of the Pilgrims began from God," said Bancroft, and he was right.

Of course it is easy for us Americans to imagine that we are the special pets of divine providence, just as it was easy for the German Kaiser to say "I and God" in the days of the earlier war. But it is the sober judgment of historians that America has a place all its own in the history of nations. We came into being in response to a clear and definite purpose. A new theory of human life and government was put into execution in a remote part of the earth's surface. You see, those early Americans had to get far away from everybody else to try out their experiment, for the civilized world would have laughed at them, as indeed they did. The best way to understand what motives led them to follow the long-distance call would be to read excerpts from some of the early charters in which we see their faith clearly written down. If some of our modern secularists will read the A B C of the history of the U. S. A., they will see that it was not men of their type whom God used as foundation stones in the building he was erecting here.

The first of these charters was granted by James I in 1606 for the settlement of Virginia. It speaks of the colonists as having "desires for the furtherance of so noble a work which may, by the providence of Almighty God, hereafter trend to the glory of his divine majesty, in the propagation of the Christian religion." The second charter, some three years later, declares that it shall be necessary for all the Virginia colonists to "live together in the fear and true worship of Almighty God, Christian peace and civil quietness."

The Maryland Charter of 1632 says that the founders of the colony were "animated with a laudable and pious zeal for extending the Christian religion."

The Massachusetts Bay Colony was chartered, so the record says, principally to win the natives to "the knowledge and obedience of the only true God, and the Savior of mankind and the Christian faith."

A notable document of 1643, the Confederation Articles of the Plantations, begins in this way: "Whereas we all came into these parts of America with one and the same end and namely, to advance the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ and to enjoy the liberties of the gospel in purity with peace." So we might go on almost indefinitely, and the further we went the more we would see the deeply religious tone of the early state documents of America.

Just as Columbus began his expedition in prayer and insisted upon divine worship as one of the duties of the ship's company; just as his sailors sang the Te Deum when they sighted land; just as he planted the cross and knelt in prayer as soon as he sprang on land after his voyage was over—so the first state paper ever adopted for the government of a community on Ameri-

can soil began with the words written in the cabin of the Mayflower: "In the Name of God, Amen."

One likes to read again the story of that landing at Jamestown in May 1607, when 102 men disembarked from the vessel that had been home to them for four months, on that island in the James river, green with springtime grasses. There was one clergyman among them, Rev. Mr. Hunt, and the first structure erected in the colony was the canvas church. Services were regularly held on weekdays and Sundays, and every man was required to attend or pay a fine of so many pounds of tobacco, which was the currency of the day.

So too, speaking of the landing of the Pilgrims some fourteen years later, Bishop Fowler says it was a Sabbath day when they came, and hence they refused to build a fire. The waves broke over them as they disembarked, and as the water struck them it froze and they stood clad in ice as if in coats of mail. But, cold as they were, they knelt in prayer on the rocky shore, committing themselves and their enterprise to God.

Amid the storm they sang,
And the stars heard and the sea,
And the sounding aisles of the dim woods rang
To the anthem of the free.

Let us now pass over the intervening century and come down to the time of our struggle for independence. What do we find there? See how clear is the hand of God in it all. Never was a better illustration of that Scripture text than, "God makes the wrath of man to praise him." If it had not been for the particular king then on the throne of England, how different history might have been! Who was George III? He was a mad king of Teutonic descent, the son of a German princess. London was solid against the war with the Colonies, and out of 8,000,000 English folk, only 150,000 favored the war. The strongest part of the English army was the 30,000 Germans known as the Hessians. Burke, Fox and Pitt all opposed the conflict. Hundreds of British officers resigned their commissions and retired from the British army rather than fight against their brothers of Anglo-Saxon descent in the Colonies of America. Thus it came to pass that the Colonies had to fight for their rights because of the situation created by a stubborn, shortsighted monarch and his hired bands of assassins.

We pass on a few years to the time of the adoption of the Constitution by a group of men seeking to weld the thirteen colonies into one nation. They had their difficulties, as we know. Nobody sensed the situation better than Benjamin Franklin. He arose one day in the Assembly and delivered a notable speech. He asked how it was that, as they sat there day after day groping for truth, nobody had thought of applying to the Father of Lights to illumine their understanding. He therefore moved that hereafter prayers be held every morning of the Assembly before they proceeded to business, and that one or more of the clergy of the city be requested to officiate in the service.

As we survey the struggle of our forefathers for the settlement and independence of this country, we can gratefully recall the words of Tennyson:

O Thou that sendest out the men
To rule by land and sea—
Strong mother of a lion line,
Be proud of those strong sons of Thine,
Who wrenched their rights from Thee.

II

Let us now turn to the other side of the picture, and ask, What is America doing in gratitude to the Great Governor of Nations, in return for his watchful care over her interests?

Here is a fair question: How do we know that national pleading is acceptable to God? Have we any scriptural instances of men reaching up hands of blessing for a large area? Yes. It would be well for all Christian patriots to study the example of Moses in his intercession for Israel, as we have it in Exodus 32 and Numbers 14. Fully one-third of the Bible is occupied with the record of God's dealings with nations. Hence, unless times have radically changed, the divine ear is open to the cry of a great people as well as to that of an individual.

The story of the first prayer ever uttered in the United States Congress will be of interest. When Congress convened, one Mr. Cushing moved that it should be opened with prayer. It was opposed by Mr. Jay of New York and Mr. Rutledge of South Carolina because the men were so divided in religious sentiments (Episcopalians, Quakers, Baptists, Presbyterians, Congregationalists) that they could not join in the same act of worship. Thereupon Samuel Adams arose and said he was no bigot and could hear a prayer from any gentleman of piety and virtue who was at the same time a friend to his country. He said he was a stranger in Philadelphia, but had heard that Mr. Duche deserved that character and therefore moved that Mr. Duche, an Episcopalian clergyman, be desired to read prayers to Congress the next morning. The motion was seconded and passed. Accordingly, the next morning the minister appeared in his robes and read several prayers in the established form and also the Psalter for September 7, which was Psalm 35.

The incident shows how strong were denominational feelings in those days. Prayer was not objected to because the members of Congress did not believe in God or in the value of prayer, but because they each believed so intensely in God after his own fashion. John Adams goes on to tell us that this day of the first prayer was the morning after they had heard of the horrible cannonade of Boston. It seemed as if heaven had ordained that particular psalm. After the reading the minister, to the surprise of everybody present, struck out into extempore prayer so earnestly that the tears gushed into the eyes of the grave Quakers of Philadelphia.

It must have been a scene worthy of the painter's art. Carpenter's Hall in Philadelphia was the place where the devoted individuals met. Washington was kneeling and Henry Randolph, Rutledge, Lee and Jay; by their sides stood the Puritan patriots of New England who at that very moment had reason to believe that armed soldiery were wasting their humble house-

olds. They believed that Boston had been bombarded nd destroyed, and so they turned their eyes imploringly o Heaven for divine interposition and aid. Isn't it trange that a nation will cry to God in its hour of mergency and then forget him in its hour of prosperity?

I wonder if you would like to hear that first prayer? Listen to these words:

O Lord our Heavenly Father, high and mighty King of kings, Lord of lords, who dost from Thy throne behold all the dwellers upon earth, and reignest with power supreme and uncontrolled over all kingdoms, empires and governments—look down in mercy, we beseech Thee, upon these American States, who have fled to Thee from the rod of the oppressor and thrown themselves upon Thy gracious protection, desiring to be henceforth dependent only upon Thee. To Thee have they appealed for the righteousness of their cause. To Thee do they now look up for that countenance and support which Thou alone canst give. Take them, therefore, Heavenly Father, under Thy nurturing care. Give them wisdom in counsel and valor in the field. Defeat the malicious designs of our cruel adversaries. Convince them of the unrighteousness of their cause, and if they still persist in their sanguinary purposes, O let the voice of Thine own unerring justice, sounding in their hearts, constrain them to drop their weapons of war from their unnerved hands in the day of battle.

Be Thou present, O Lord of wisdom, and direct the councils of this honorable Assembly. Enable them to settle things upon the best and surest foundation, that the scene of blood may speedily be closed; that order, harmony and peace may effectually be restored, and truth and justice, religion and piety prevail and flourish amongst Thy people.

Preserve the health of their bodies and the vigor of their minds. Shower down upon them and the millions they here represent such temporal blessings as Thou seest expedient for them in this world, and crown them with everlasting glory in the world to come. All this we ask in the name and through the merits of Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Savior, Amen.

What a beautiful prayer with which America began he orderly business of her Congressional actions! And o this day our courts of political life, both in state and nation, invoke the blessing of the Almighty God upon heir labors. The very fact that these early legislators who had fled from the tyranny of a state church to this new land permitted prayer in the halls of Congress, hows that while they would not tolerate the union of church and state, neither would they separate religion nd state. They believed in an established God, but not an established church. James Bryce said there never had been a civilized nation without religion. Away back n Plutarch's day, that historian said, "Religion is the bond of all society and the pillar of all legislation." Montesquieu regarded religion as the support of society nd Edmund Burke said the same thing in a slightly different way. Our own George Washington uttered ome words which need to be heeded today not only by America but by all the nations of the earth: "Of all he dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports."

'What Mean These Stones?'

By Lowell R. Ditzen

SOME time ago I visited the tomb of Abraham Lincoln in Springfield, Illinois. It is a stately monument of massive piling and soaring shaft. Even a complete stranger would surely exclaim, "Here this people has striven to memorialize something great in its national life!"

As I walked about that familiar shrine I found myself softly repeating: "What mean these stones?" And as some artisan might fit together the shattered fragments of an ancient tablet, so I reconstructed the setting of that persistent question.

The people of Israel, after four decades of wearisome and futile wandering, came at last to the shores of the river Jordan. Across its flooded waters could be seen the Promised Land foretold by visionary, seer and bard—the land of peace and plenty. As the precious ark of the covenant was carried by the priests to the brink of the water, behold! the miracle of the Red sea was re-enacted, and all the people walked safely across on dry ground. According to Holy Writ, when the entire nation had passed over, in response to Jehovah's call for a fitting memorial,

> Joshua called the twelve men—out of every tribe a man; and Joshua said unto them, "pass over before the ark of Jehovah, your God, into the midst of the Jordan and take you up every man of you a stone upon his shoulder—that when your children ask in time to come, saying 'What mean ye by these stones?' then ye shall say unto them, 'Because the waters of the Jordan were cut off before the ark—when it passed over the Jordan—these stones shall be for a memorial unto the children of Israel forever.' "

As some inquiring pilgrim from Jericho, removed by three generations from that historic crossing, might wonder at the significance of those stones, so I mused at Springfield on that "great figure in American history."

I recalled the annals of statecraft and the unsentimental pages of history, and remembered the actions of a wise President who,

> . . . when the judgment thunders split the house,
> Wrenching the rafters from their ancient rest,
> . . . held the ridgepole up, and spiked again
> The rafters of the Home. . . .

I heard again the biographer's epic of a gaunt wilderness lad, destined for ignorance, poverty and oblivion, but whose name is revered in the sanctuaries of the great. And I saw a downtrodden black race, unshackled from slavery, lift grateful hands to their great liberator.

"But," I thought, "is this the ultimate and final meaning of these stones—a President of fine political sagacity and acumen, a man of strong initiative and perseverance; or a leader on whom chance benignly bestowed the privilege of a race's devotion?"

And I said: "All these things might not have been

and Lincoln would yet live! These stones commemorate not alone what this man *did,* but what he *was!"*

Even as the staccato repetition of Joshua's question sharpened my musings, the stones took on new meaning. They seemed to whisper three answers, offering the paradoxical clues to Lincoln's genius.

I

"These stones mark the character of one in whom was found the divine alchemy of the *uncompromising spirit tempered by compassion."*

As Elijah of old, inflexible in his denunciations of injustice and deflection from the way of Jehovah, so Lincoln had within him the stern moral fiber which splintered not when the mighty winds blew. There was an unvarying constancy in the spirit of the young man who, in the far south, spoke solemnly to his companion at the slave block: "If I ever have an opportunity to hit this institution, I'll hit it hard," and the burdened President of our Republic, who, though yearning for unity and concord, was adamant in his conviction that racial oppression shou'd not exist among us. A man of ethical rigidity, of moral inflexibility—a Spartan of the uncompromising spirit!

Yet the portraiture of Lincoln would be incomplete if the brush paused here. For truly the genius of his life lay in the interpenetration of gentleness, kindliness, mercy, forgiveness, compassion. What child has not heard how he stopped to lift a frail baby bird back into its nest? What man is there whose heart is dimmed with sorrow or whose body is wracked with suffering, but finds deep consolation in reading the note penned to a brokenhearted mother whose four sons would never come marching home? Here indeed was one who, like the Prophet of Nazareth, radiated a spirit of "gracious, soothing, holy beneficence."

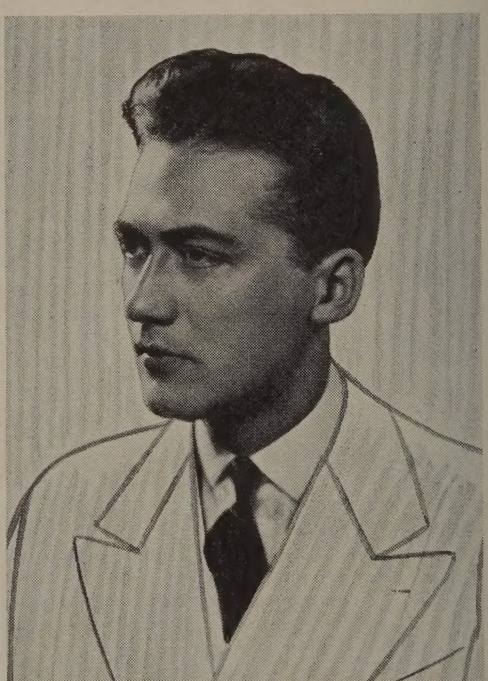
Here was one who had in him the indomitable hardihood of the seasoned warrior, but who, like Sir Galahad of the Holy Grail, shared his crust with the beggar at the gate. In generations to come the biography of this man may be a matter of indifferent concern and his acts of statecraft may be remembered only on the worm-eaten pages of history, but if this spirit is lost in the lives of men, these stones shall have been piled in vain!

In our current endeavors, how urgent is the challenge for this uncompromising temper which becomes Godlike through mercy and compassion! In the midst of insidious and powerful forces of poverty, ignorance, "wars and rumors of wars," political corruption and spiritual indolence, assuredly we need men of heroic convictions and immovable faith. Men who answer the call of the Eternal to "Get thee up on a high mountain; lift up thy voice with strength, lift it up, be not afraid, say unto the cities of Judah, behold your God."

Yet too, on all sides one hears the sad cries of humanity—cries which cannot be assuaged without a warm and inherent sensitiveness to the feeling of men. There come to mind the haunting faces of some four thousand inmates of one of our state "old people's homes" and the lingering words of the chaplain: "There's just one thing these folks really want, and that's a friend to chat and laugh with them, and with them to shed a tear of joy and sorrow over their moments of bliss and their nights of darkness." Portia put it so aptly: "And earthly power doth then show likest God's, when mercy seasons justice."

What mean these stones? They mean the uncompromising spirit sweetened with the milk of human kindness and gentleness. They mean that there lived a man of great strength—and great compassion.

Amid the lengthening shadows at Springfield, I said: "God grant that that spirit shall not depart from our midst!"



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II

But even as I reflected, came the further realization: "These stones bespeak the paradox of the *realist fused with the idealist."* Surely Lincoln was a realist! Here was a man trained in the exacting requirements of the law: whose cogent and surgical mind knifed through the tissues of the secondary and the superficial on the debating floor and in the courtroom; who dealt masterfully in policies and issues with nations and peoples for pawns; who knew the crushing brutality of opposition; who passed through the lonely vales of sorrow and heartbreak; who felt the sharp thrust of bitterness; who saw life's tawdry and ugly side; who was endowed with the constructive curiosity of the scientist and the critical sobriety of the scholar; who drank deeply of the poisoned cup of misrepresentation—surely this executive, administrator, man of affairs was practical and realistic!

Yet this loved, bent figure, more than all this, leaves

us his imperishable dreams. Without the visionary, the poet, the romanticist, the dreamer, the idealist, the picture would be as a portrait without a face. This was a man who reached for life's appealing beauties, its timeless verities and its ennobling simplicities—a man of unshakable dreams! He takes his rightful place with the great souls who envisioned and "bet their lives" on the coming of the dawn when love would rise supreme from the bout with hate; when tolerance would finally conquer over intolerance; when right would stand upon the prostrate form of wrong; and when the ways of God should be the "guide and stay" of the ways of man.

Oh, that this potent mixture of disposition might be increasingly evident in our days! Yes, we may be justly grateful that people are turning away from that which is ill-founded, slipshod and superficial; that critical intelligence and realism are at a high premium. But well may we recall Lincoln's refusal to sacrifice his dreams on the barren altar of fact. There came to mind the tragic emptiness of H. G. Wells' realistic young man about town:

> By some trick of the imagination he saw life as an interminable Bond Street, desolate, full of rubbish . . . temptations, and down it all he drove as the damned drive, wearily; inexplicably. . . . And then suddenly he reached out his arms in the darkness and prayed aloud to the silences, "O God! Give me back my visions! Give me back my visions!"

In a world which gives birth to a gospel such as is offered by the fascist, with the major premise that man is the creature of economic factors and by such as to reach his fullest flower; or the nazi who offers the proposition that man's origin and destiny are determined by biological factors, well should we all cry to the great silences: "O God! Give us back our visions—of man—the child of God—a little lower than the angels!"

What mean these stones? They speak forever of one who traveled many muddy miles, but who found the reflection of the blue skies even in the puddles at his feet. Lincoln dipped the pen of reality into the ink of dreams.

I found myself saying: "May the great Ruler of men and their destinies keep this spirit in us always."

III

With the coming of twilight my reflections, prompted by the beauty of the monument, crystallized into this further answer: "These stones remind the ages of a *self-conscious man who found confidence in God.*"

Here was memorialized a gaunt, angular, awkward, self-conscious man, painfully aware of his limitations and inadequacies, but who found poise and power and purpose in the awareness that Almighty God played the lead in the destinies of men and nations. Here was no conventional, formal or shallow religionist. In him were fused the temper and the ability both of the mystic and reformer. Here was one who often felt that he was following "afar off," who in the secret citadel of the soul cried, "O Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief!" Here was a pilgrim, unlike that of Kipling's Tomlinson, whose God came "from a printed book" or a "borrowed word of neighbor, priest or kin," but rather who fought the battles of faith to know the God of all spiritual adventurers. Here was one whose spiritual explorations were personal and therefore fresh and commanding. Here was one who brought the grave problems of a great people into the counsel of the Eternal.

Like Mount Everest, standing out among the Himalayas, came to mind the sentence of William James, "Life becomes significant only when it communicates an eagerness to him that lives it." Abraham Lincoln found a consuming eagerness for life, as he humbly besought the Almighty God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob for vision and strength, for wisdom and assurance.

What mean these stones? These stones mark a man for the ages because in him were: uncompromising conviction tempered by mercy; realism become purposeful through idealism; and inherent self-consciousness glorified through humble confidence in God.

Can that spirit ever be entombed in the expressionless grandeur of granite? Rather, it finds its rightful and everlasting home in the souls of men, who resolve in their inmost hearts that "that life shall not have been spent in vain."

If you should stand some day before Lincoln's tomb, I think this prayer would surge within you, as it did in me: "God, grant that we, the people of the nation which Abraham Lincoln loved, may take new resolve to live again the grandeur of character which was in him!"

Truly, then, "these stones shall be for a memorial unto the children of America forever."

Mark Twain's 'War Prayer'

O LORD OUR GOD, help us to tear their soldiers to bloody shreds with our shells; help us to cover their smiling fields with the pale forms of their patriot dead; help us to drown the thunder of the guns with the wailing of the wounded, writhing in pain; help us to lay waste their humble homes with a hurricane of fire; help us to wring the hearts of their unoffending widows with unavailing grief; help us to turn them out roofless with their little children to wander unfriended through wastes of their desolated land in rags and hunger and thirst, sport of the sun flames of summer and the icy winds of winter, broken in spirit, worn with travail, imploring Thee for the refuge of the grave and denied it—for our sakes, who adore Thee, Lord, blast their hopes, blight their lives, protract their bitter pilgrimage, make heavy their steps, water their way with their tears, stain the white snow with the blood of their wounded feet! We ask of One who is the spirit of love and who is the ever faithful refuge and friend of all who are sore beset, and seek His aid with humble and contrite hearts. Grant our prayer, O Lord, and Thine shall be the praise and honor and glory, now and forever. Amen.

Messengers of Freedom

By Lucius F. Reed

Let my people go. Exodus 10:3.

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor; he hath sent me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord. Isaiah 61:1, as quoted by Jesus.

THE plaintive wail of all human servitude, and the deep longing for freedom, seemed to be gathered up in the Negro spiritual as it came over the radio on Sunday morning:

> Go down Moses,
> Way down in Egypt's land.
> Tell ole Pharaoh
> To let my people go.
> When Israel was in Egypt's land—
> Oppressed so hard
> They could not stand;
> Let my people go.

But in it also is that strange, divine compulsion that sends some men to be the liberators of their oppressed fellows; that gives them no ease until they cry out against tyranny and bondage. What a noble company they have been through the ages from Moses to Gandhi! In them religion has reached its finest expression. The conquerors and dictators may fill the pages of history by their exploits, but the liberators fill the hearts of the people with grateful memories.

The soul of these men was expressed long ago by a great prophet of Israel, when another night of captivity was passing: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor; he hath sent me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." To these words Jesus turned when he read the sacred scroll in the synagogue of his home town. Having read them, he said, "This day hath this scripture been fulfilled in your ears." He made it the proclamation of his own mission. May we not reverently say that it is fulfilled when any man feels the sad and weary weight of human bondage and dedicates himself to some cause of freedom?

There are three phases of this great pronouncement that we of today need to ponder. Here are four striking figures of speech depicting human servitude; the realization that the passion to set men free is of God; and the expression of a sustaining optimism.

SCRIPTURE BROUGHT DOWN TO DATE

Just what the prophet had in mind when he penned these four phrases we may not know; nor what Jesus was thinking when he read them. But types of bondage are much the same through the ages, and Dr. E. Stanley Jones may be quite right when he puts them into modern words and tells us that Jesus was thinking of "the economically disinherited, the politically and socially disinherited, the physically disinherited, and the morally and spiritually disinherited." However that may be, the words just as they were written are still meaningful.

The slaves of poverty are still listening for good tidings of freedom. There is a poverty that is noble and that frees the soul from the tyranny of things; but this is self-chosen and not imposed by the greed of the powerful. There is also a poverty in which free men work together to wrest a living from the earth and enjoy what they can produce, or a poverty that is endured for some great cause. This may cleanse and strengthen the characters of men. But we need no arguments to prove that there is a poverty that "grinds the faces of the poor," that kills the spirit. It is the poverty of exploitation, or that comes from insuperable odds which crush the will to achieve. In our imagination we can picture a large part of our own generation with their pinched, dulled faces, too broken in spirit even to hope for liberation. They are too crushed to raise their hands in revolt. Their only hope, in these terribly dark and confusing days, is in those who can bring them freedom.

RELEASE FROM CAPTIVITY, RECOVERY OF SIGHT

"Release for the captives." The right of one man to own another and use him for his own purposes is very old. The misery it has caused is beyond imagination. This right is no longer recognized. But the desire to dominate and control and use other men still thrives. So the captivities of men change their forms but not their effects. Social, political and economic servitudes still exist, but under different names. Men live in fear of their masters and dare not say their souls are their own. Many are held captive to obsolete traditions, customs and systems which they seem powerless to overthrow. These innocent captives still wait the messenger of freedom.

"Recovery of sight to the blind." Sight is freedom. Blindness is servitude. In this phrase are included not merely the physically blind, but also the spiritually blind who are the slaves of ignorance, superstition, prejudice and falsehood. A grand assault against these ancient tyrannies has been made in the last few centuries. The printed page, the open school, the spread of scientific knowledge, the radio that might be the teacher of every man.

How different it is from Jesus' day! None need be intellectually blind today. Yet the illiteracy of men is still great and even science, the emancipator, has been used to foster superstition. The very means of spreading knowledge has become the instrument for perverting men's thoughts and increasing the darkness of their prepudices. Knowledge in abundance, just for the asking, yet we think of the wisdom of the humorist's remark that "it is better not to know so much than to know so much that is not so." Now we are fearful lest the fear of propaganda blind us to the truth when spoken. In this bondage are the rich and the powerful, and sometimes the learned, as well as the lowly and despised; for prejudice, intolerance and self-interest know no class or condition. I am sure that we will all

gree that there is still, in these tumultuous days, a nging and challenging call for the messengers of free- om to bring recovery of sight to the blind.

LIBERTY FROM HOSTILE FORCES

"To set at liberty them that are bruised." What a range expression! We would expect to "heal" them at are bruised. Yet is not the other a better state- ent of our need? We cannot heal the bruises of men. hat nature does. But men can be liberated from the rces that assault and wound and crush their bodies d souls. The needless sufferings of men, the diseases at might have been prevented, the unnecessary deaths, e deformed and bruised bodies which could have been evented by a little care, a little knowledge—the ought is appalling. The mass of human beings are ill without adequate physical and medical care. When e turns to the preventable injustices that bruise good en one realizes that hosts wait to be set at liberty om the forces that bruise. Even religion, in the name God, has killed those who would bring freedom.

All these phrases of the prophet have a poetic ring d they can be read with pleasant emotions; but when ey are pondered and the meaning back of them clearly scerned, when we see human bondage as it has been d is today, they wring the heart. But this fact turns to the other side of the picture. The bondage of men s stirred the hearts and fired the purposes of great uls and made them the messengers of freedom. The avery of Egypt was dark, but the emancipation under e leadership of Moses was a bright spot in history. o it is inspiring to turn to the second phase of this onouncement: the realization that the passion to set en free is of God.

THE SOCIAL GOSPEL IS RELIGIOUS

If any of us think that religion at its best is little ore than wishful thinking he needs to study the reac- ons of the men who have felt that they were called God to set men free. Recall the story of Moses in e desert as he pleaded with God against the commis- on, and offered the excuse of his own inability. But the end he could not escape. Isaiah, when called, rotests on the ground of his own unfitness: "I am a an of unclean lips and of a people of unclean lips." ut his final response was: "Here am I, send me." One ay still read the inner struggle of Jeremiah when he otested against the divine commission and resolved repudiate it, and cry out no more against violence d spoiling. But he discovered that it was as a fire rning in his bones. "Thou art stronger than I and st prevailed," is the word of submission to divine call.

One need not go back to the Bible, however, for ustrations of this sense of compulsion of the "power t themselves" in the lives of the liberators. Jawaharal ehru of India, who is not a religious man, yet writing out what he had suffered and the years he had spent prison for the cause of freedom of his people he said: Sometimes the ghosts of those dead yesterdays whis- red 'Was it worth while'?" Then he realized that he uld not have done otherwise. "My major decisions public affairs came from a force beyond my control," he says. Was it not true of our own great liberators, Washington and Lincoln? They seemed to have the sense of a divine will that sent them on and sustained them in severest trials and discouragements.

Is it not just this sense of a divine compulsion, however, that most of us lack? We are not aware of any call of God. We certainly would not think of saying, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he anointed me." The significant thing is that many of us are wrong in this regard. The very compassion we have for the oppressed, the burning indignation against injustice, the willingness to fight for freedom's cause, all bear witness to our anointing. Have you looked on human bondage and felt no desire to set men free? Of

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course you have not. This divine compulsion is more common than we think. It is in every true teacher who finds a joy in crusading against ignorance, or feels the impulse to use the truth to free the minds of youth. Every doctor and every nurse for whom the infirmities, the diseases and the injuries of men are a call to action is under the divine compulsion. It is within the experience of every scientist who holds his science as a sacred trust. The holy spirit of the liberators is in us all unless we have thrust him out by our self-centeredness.

WHEN RELIGION BECOMES GREAT

Religion is great when it makes men aware of this divine anointing, fosters the liberating spirit and sends them to tell some Pharaoh to "Let my people go." The pity is that all too often organized religion has sided with the Pharaohs. When an eminent New England divine, in the days of slavery, wrote an article justifying it on scriptural grounds, it is said someone told

William Lloyd Garrison about it, only to receive the reply, "So much the worse for the Bible." Yes, so much the worse for the Bible when it is used to justify any human bondage, and so much the worse for religion when any servitude is made sacred. It is a gain for Christianity as we see that Jesus sought to bring freedom to every man, and that this freedom is not limited.

As we appreciate this, all who seek freedom for men in any realm will be able to sing together Whittier's fine verse:

> O Lord and Master of us all,
> What e'er our name or sign,
> We own thy sway, we hear thy call;
> We test our lives by thine.

Perhaps our brief survey of the ancient tyrannies made them seem so powerful and enduring that we are discouraged. So there is need to consider that last phase of the pronouncement, as Jesus read it: "to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." *This* year is God's year. Not last year. Not next year. *That* year was the year for Jesus. This year is God's acceptable year for us. It is pretty hard to believe that, isn't it? When have human liberties been so threatened? It seems as if we were about to lose all the long slow gains of many decades. Not greater freedom, but the defense of what we have, seems to be the call of this year. Let us beware. We have greater freedom within our reach than we suspect. We must not be diverted from the fight to realize it for more people. Not even a military preparedness program of colossal proportions should defeat us. We need some things to strengthen our optimism. Let us look at some of the signs of promise in the four realms covered in Jesus' pronouncement. It may be that after all this is the acceptable year of the Lord.

GOOD TIDINGS FOR THE POOR—TODAY

Are there any good tidings for the poor? Is any land of promise in sight? Like the Hebrew of old our scouts have spied out the economic land and brought back tales of a land flowing with milk and honey. They have shown us the grapes of Escol. They have assured us that with courage we may move from the economy of the wilderness to that of the land of abundance. We know now that there is hope of eliminating the poverty that deadens and destroys the soul. We know that enough to provide all the needs for a wholesome life for all is possible. Of course there are giants in the land, but none that cannot be conquered if we are courageous and determined. The number of those who believe this is increasing. More and more religious men are aware that one cannot have the love of Christ in one's soul and be complacent in the face of human hunger.

What release for the captives is in sight? Is there any such promise for them? We of America have experienced a degree of social and political liberty of which the prophet and Jesus could only have dreamed. Democracy is more than a word. It is a living reality in many hearts. Many of us have lived the lives of free men and we know what it can mean. We want it for other men. But we know that there is a great reactionary struggle on just now, but it is not final.

In different realms of our social and political life there are signs of awakening. It seemed for a while as though our ideal of freedom had been obscured by our passion for gain. The "American dream" has not been entirely forgotten. Religion is more sensitive to human exploitation than for centuries. Catholic, Protestant and Jew come nearer together in their social ideals than at any other point. The times are indeed critical, but it is because we have more at stake.

It is in the physical realm that the greatest conquests for freedom have been made. One by one old tyrants of disease have been overthrown, their kingdoms despoiled, and almost forgotten. Those which remain are in a state of siege, and we expect their eventual capitulation. The triumphs in medicine, sanitation and surgery are enormous. In spite of our inventions of new ways of killing people we live longer than any other generation ever hoped for.

How is it in the moral and spiritual realm? Do we have reason to hope for greater freedom here? If we cannot win freedom here all other liberties will fail us eventually. Our danger is in not understanding the nature of moral and spiritual liberty. We are not free simply because the power of old authorities has waned; because there is no authoritative code, or because organized religion cannot enforce its demands. We are on the road to moral and spiritual liberty when we have discovered the law of the Spirit within, and recognize the authority of truth and love.

OPENING BLIND EYES

Are the eyes of the blind being opened? The spread of learning is unprecedented; but as knowledge increases, does there come clear vision of meaning and value? I can speak of it only in religion. The increased moral earnestness in religion is promising. Every great religious body that gathers this year will discuss the vital moral issues of the day. They will seek to discover the will of God for this age. The Christian religion is more ethical and more broadly ethical than for centuries. There is a clear understanding of the spiritual among our leaders. For them it is not an attitude of the soul detached from life, but an attitude of life toward the will of God in all human affairs. Fellowship with God is not merely a state of blissful communion, but a partnership with God in a great creative work. There is more stress on the essential. Issues over which religious people quarreled a generation ago seem trivial to us. There is an encouraging tolerance due to better understanding between the Christian churches, and between all religions. Men who a few years ago were called the enemies of religion because they told us the truth are now seen to be the friends of true faith.

Are the bruised being set at liberty? Just at present we are discouraged by man's inhumanity to man. Until recently all were agreed that there was a definite increase in sympathy and mercy. Everywhere organizations for relief of misery and suffering were springing up and doing effective work. Will all that be obliterated by war? We do not believe so. We take for

ranted forms of relief for the bruised of humanity that ne generation before us did not think possible. The gure of the Good Samaritan is not likely to be left ut of our ideals of the truly religious man; nor "the ving of souls" separated from merciful ministry to ne physically, mentally and spiritually bruised. More- ver, we see more clearly that there are mighty social orces that assault and crush men. These must be anged, and it is the business of religion to bring them judgment.

Let us not forget, therefore, that this is the accept- ble year for all who desire to set at liberty them that re bruised.

If man's extremity is God's opportunity, we may ope for fresh vitality in religion. We are certainly eling the frustration of human effort, and realize our eed for the strength which can come from the Power ot ourselves. In many quarters there is a humility at is full of promise. It is a humility that makes self- dgment and repentance possible, that opens the eyes search of the better way of life.

GOD'S VOICE STILL CALLS

Religion is man's quest for life through a right rela- on to God. It roots deep in his nature. One of these oots is the desire for freedom to realize one's own ossibilities. Men become frightened at times and shrink om the responsibilities of freedom. They grow weary soul. When this happens they turn hopefully to olitical or spiritual dictators for a time. But such emic moods pass and the deeper passion asserts itself nd again they long for freedom. Then they will chafe gainst their chains and prison walls, and look for a de- verer. Because they crave freedom for themselves ere will be men who are willing "to die to make men ree." This is man's cross, but it is the cross that saves, nd the noble of the earth accept it. Nor is it beyond y of us.

The voice of God came to Moses as he was tending eep in the desert, "Go tell Pharaoh to let my people o." To Isaiah it came in the temple as he worshiped, ying, "Whom shall I send?" To Jeremiah it came as fire burning in his bones against injustice and violence. o Jesus, as a divine anointing of the Spirit in the ilderness, when alone he faced his mission. To Luther e voice spoke when he was struggling against the avery of decadent religious forms and practices. It oke to Lincoln in a southern slave market and to andhi when he saw the misery of his compatriots in outh Africa. To Pasteur the scientist, it came in the scovery of man's slavery to the deadly blight of bac- rial disease.

The word of God that makes men his messengers of reedom comes in a thousand ways. Strange indeed if it as not come to every one of us in some way and at me time, bidding us to take up the struggle against me slavery that holds our fellows in bondage. We ould not be human if we did not draw back, if we d not find excuses, if we were not all too aware of ir own inadequacy for the task. But the truly noble not turn away. Eventually they go, and demand om some brutal and hardhearted Pharaoh, "Let my ople go."

Keeping the American Faith

By James A. Richards

And as thy servant was busy here and there, he was gone. I Kings 20:40.

IT is stirring to live in a time of rapid change of thought. We have been doing that these last few months. I do not believe that the change of sentiment during this time has been nearly so great as it appears to have been, and is therefore commonly assumed really to have been. Most newspapers, radio speakers and politicians have vied to gain the public attention for the purpose of singing the selfsame song. Those who disagree with them have been drowned out, or, when they have spoken, have gone unreported or have been confined to the small print of the inner pages.

But if our recent change of thought has been by no means so great as commonly assumed, it still has been great indeed. One has only to walk downtown or talk with one's friends to be sure of that. As I have watched this transformation I have again and again been re- minded of the almost humorous Old Testament story about the man who was given one to keep, but lost him, and for the explanation could frame no report except "As thy servant was busy here and there, he was gone." Certain great visions, great strategies, great convictions have recently almost vanished from articulate American thinking. We have not sent them away; they have not been disproved; they have only been neglected, and as we were busy here and there, they were gone. I wonder if it would be useful to name a few of these.

I

A little while ago we talked much of tolerance and said that we were going to keep it. We gloried that it was written in the Bill of Rights; we analyzed de- mocracy and found tolerance at its heart; we proudly contrasted our American way with that of the totali- tarian states; we generally criticized a statement by a public man that the essence of democracy is the rule of the majority saying, "No, the essence of democracy is the fair and tolerant treatment of minorities."

Then the European war blazed red up to the very stars. We did not consciously send our loved tolerance away. Its central place in democracy and worth in all the social process was not disproved. It was only neg- lected, and while we were busy here and there, tol- erance went. An incredible narrowing, hardening vin- dictiveness of thought grew up among us. We began again that calling of names that is one of the surest symptoms of intellectual bankruptcy and general hys- teria. It became good form for those who did not agree with him to call the pacifist a coward, a traitor, gullible, an isolationist, when as a matter of fact he might be more courageous than his accuser, more ready to fight for his country, a deeper student of the final human good, not at all an isolationist, but anxious only that our intervention on the world field be not destruc- tive but truly helpful.

On the other hand, it became good form for those

who do not agree with the militarist to accuse him of loving the slaughter of war and being ice-cold to all the suffering that war brings on the innocent and guilty alike, when as a matter of fact the militarist may have an abhorrence of these things more profound, more tender and piteous than that of his accuser. Those of us who happen at different times to have stood in almost every one of the possible attitudes toward war, and thus learned at first hand their inner feeling and appeal, may have a certain advantage in trying to keep good-natured in times like these. Yet even such may need constant reminder of that freedom of thought, freedom of expression, freedom of conscience, tolerance toward those who differ with us, that once was extolled as the very breath of the American faith. Beware America, lest while busy here and there, this be gone!

II

We recently talked on every hand of the futility of war. Without for a moment forgetting to honor our sacred dead we yet celebrated the futility of modern war. We denied that war is police action; for the essence of police action is to isolate violence, to check it, to haul those who have broken the peace before an impartial tribunal representative of the common good, while the essence of war is to participate in violence, to spread it. Instead of bringing any criminal before an impartial tribunal, war rolls legislator, executive, judge and executioner altogether into one. We therefore concluded that the decisions resulting from war are as non-moral as those of a dog-fight or a duel. Where else in all the social process do we treat morality and physical superiority as identical?

From this we easily went further and said that there is no real victory in modern war because every participant loses by coming off worse than before, and that the apparent victors in such a process have been made incapable of building a peace that is anything more than the prophecy of another and worse war. All this we said about the futility of war and even during the first months of the present war great voices were welcomed among us as they read in it the proof that you cannot have great nations living in utter selfishness toward each other, squeezing each other economically, seeking unnatural alliances against each other, sharpening knives for each other's backs, and expect such conduct to lead anywhere but to universal destruction.

Then something happened. We did not consciously send these convictions away. They were not disproved, but they were neglected, but while we were busy here and there, they were gone. Or if they were remembered, we were told that this war is different: this *is* police action. This time destruction is moral; this time the victory of the nations we sincerely love the best is identical with the victory of God and Christ. This time carnage and starvation are blessed of Heaven. Beware lest we become opportunists and while we are busy here and there these great convictions be gone!

III

So far as I know, it has been very long indeed since any one of us has been so puerile as to think that we have no enemies. We have known that it is a tragic, a dangerous, a critical world in which we live. But lately we felt sure that we could name our greatest enemy. It is not Mexico or Japan or Italy or Russia or Germany.

There is a greater enemy than any of these or all of these put together. This enemy corrupts more completely, destroys more utterly, extinguishes hope more darkly and finally, is the most complete of all the negations of the Christian way of life. It is both the arch-enemy of America and the arch-enemy of humanity as a whole, of every nation and government and people. Undefeated, this enemy will put out the light of democracy in every land on earth, and stop in its tracks every

James A. Richards

present movement for social justice and freedom. That arch-enemy of all is war itself.

While being busy here and there, shall we let this truth escape us? Shall we enthrone our greatest and most tyrannical enemy in the fatuous hope of thereby checking some of our lesser ones?

IV

Nor was it long ago that we said there are some things to do about this arch-enemy of all good besides surrender to it out of hand. We knew these things would have to be daring, novel and difficult, and we liked to cast Uncle Sam in the role of a leader in such things. We felt it the time for fresh courage, adventure and sacrifice, and that only such innovations can save the world from the vicious circles and dilemmas in which it is at present wallowing toward universal destruction. We were enthusiastic for a world justice which would afford to all nations equal and free access to the world's resources that God put here not for some

ut for all of his children. We said that no great government can fight except on the basis of conscription nd that that fact is but one of many proofs that men on't want to fight. Men fight only when supplied ith such great motives as fear and injustice. Stop caring them, and stop treating them unjustly, and they ill stop fighting—and the Germans as quickly as any thers.

It was a perception as simple, as true, as daring as hat that put moral passion in our advocacy of "Union ow." Moreover, we had before us a great example—e had Gandhi, an unconfessed Christian, yet hailed y many as the most Christian man alive. We had orked out before us a technique which in this imperect world does not stop all blood-letting but that does educe it to a minimum and that instead of provoking onquest makes a complete and permanent conquest impossible.

Then something happened. We did not deliberately nd consciously send these visions, these strategies, these onvictions away. Nobody disproved them. Instead, he tides of war added new proof to the futility of verything but them. Yet while we were busy here and here, they largely departed. Men who once loved and proclaimed them began denominating all those who still herished them as gullible, parasitic, unreal. About that uestion, "Who is the realist?" history may have something yet to say.

V

Long ago it was said, "Thou shalt not kill." God is father not of some men but of all. Humanity is one amily. Those who take the sword shall perish with he sword, as they are doing in Europe now. The deepst and mightiest, the most central and the most effient thing in the universe, is good will that repents of ts own sins and tries to repair them, that calls the ighteous to bear the sins of the wicked as their own amily disgrace and heal the wicked of their sins, not by rying to slay them, but by heroic, unconquerable and lisarming good will toward them. It is not an easy doctrine, but it is good-natured, clear-eyed, daring, prohetic of the good of all. Long ago these things were aid. Lately they were repeated among us, with such ower as never before in the history of the world. We elt that we had discovered the real gospel at last, and hat the Prince of Peace was at last coming into his own.

Beware, beware, O America the Beautiful, lest while ve are busy here and there, these things be gone!

Christianity

To have courage without pugnacity,
To have conviction without bigotry,
To have charity without condescension,
To have faith without credulity,
To have love of humanity without mere sentimentalty,
To have meekness with power
And emotion with sanity—
That is Christianity.

CHARLES E. HUGHES.

The New Order—Humbug or Reality?

BY J. B. GROSER*

THERE are three verses in the New Testament to which I want to call your attention: St. Matthew 3: 1—"John the Baptist came, preaching . . . Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand"; St. Mark 1: 14—"And after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God"; and, again, Acts of the Apostles 3: 19; St. Peter preaching, says: "Repent ye, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord."

I

The mixture of repentance with hope is unmistakable in all three passages. But people still find it difficult to understand. "If God wants his Kingdom to be set up on earth, why does he not bring it?" "If God wants this war to stop, why does he not bring us peace?" "If my life has got into a tangle, why does not God get me out of it and make it straight again?"

When people come to me, as they come so often to every priest, with problems such as these, my mind turns to the story of Naaman the Syrian, who came to the prophet Elisha to be delivered of the terrible disease of leprosy. He was told to go and dip himself in the river Jordan, and he turned away in a rage. But his servant came to him and said: "My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? How much rather then, when he saith to thee, Wash, and be clean?"

We too, like Naaman, are filled with rage when we try to break out of some prisonhouse in which we have become enclosed, wanting, like him, to do some gallant deed, the chance to prove to ourselves and others what splendid fellows we are. Why does not God get us out of it, and give us peace in some spectacular fashion? Why does he not break down the barriers which keep us enclosed, and the chains that bind us? When we find ourselves in this condition, we instinctively blame circumstance, while all the time the only thing that stands between ourselves and the freedom we yearn to attain is our own lack of strength.

Sometimes we pray with all our might, spending a long time on our knees, trying to make God do what we want, forgetting that God probably wanted to do what we ask long before we were aware of our need. But the chief purpose of prayer is not to coax God into doing what we want, or to try to change God's will: it is to find out what is God's will for us. So often it is a case of God trying to get a word in edgeways, saying, quite simply: "There is one little thing that you must do before you are in a helpable condition." If our prayers bring us to that, they have succeeded.

There is one absolute condition for forgiveness, only one way out when our lives have got into a tangle of

*A sermon recently preached in Westminster Abbey by the vicar of Christ Church, East End, London.

sin; and that is repentance. We can enter the new life only if we are prepared to repudiate the old, and recognize our responsibility for it. We must be ready to say: "I am what I am, when I have taken into account all the extenuating circumstances through my fault, my own fault, my own most grievous fault."

It is a little thing to do; but how difficult it was for Naaman. How much harder it is for a man to admit that he has been wrong and say so from his heart than to do some great deed to show what a splendid fellow he is in spite of it! And how strange it is that so many people look upon confession of sin as an act of weakness; whereas, in fact, it is the very sign by which we rise to the splendor of our humanity and its strength. It is man, and man alone, who has this capacity for recognizing his responsibility for his state. It is the sign of a person. Only because of it can there be any meaning in human life, anything in the nature of friendship and true personal relationship. I would not—would you?—care to own as a real friend someone who was incapable of saying, "I am sorry," when he had sinned against me or in some way injured me.

Neither fellowship, nor forgiveness, nor a new life is possible until we have faced this fact of our responsibility. If we do not, we remain the prey of circumstance, and the burden of sin makes us incapable of action. We can never be sensible of freedom, because freedom can only be attained through the lifting of that burden. We can never be conscious of unity within ourselves, in face of our divided and weak wills and the lack of harmony in our personal lives, until we have not only recognized our responsibility for the past and repudiated it, but are eager to surrender to the new life and willing to sacrifice everything for it. For the new life involves nothing less than the surrender of our whole being to God, in whom alone we can discover what the fullness of manhood means. No attempt to escape from that inexorable fact by comparing our sins with those of somebody else will free us. "God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are . . . or even as this publican"; that cannot save us. Nothing will suffice but an honest facing of truth about ourselves, about our present condition and our responsibility for it, in the light of that true manhood which has been revealed to us through our Lord Jesus Christ, and the deliberate turning from the old way of living in which we have become involved, with God perhaps somewhere on the circumference, to the new way of living with God at its very center.

II

If that is true of each one of us as individuals—that we can never experience the sense of forgiveness or freedom, or what it means to be a man or a woman, until we have gone through that procedure—it is equally true of us as a nation as a condition of national health. How far, then, would it be true to say that we here in Britain are yet prepared honestly to face the situation in which we have become involved, and to acknowledge any real responsibility for it?

I know there is an immense amount of good will about, not least because of the many friends who have helped me and my people in the East End of London. I know how eagerly we all talk of the setting-up of a new world after the war. But do we really want this new world? Of course, we all want the war to end; but that is by no means the same thing. I do not doubt, too, that we all want to abolish slums and poverty and enmity between nations, and this perpetual fear of one another. But are we yet prepared to acknowledge to the full our responsibility, both as a nation and as individuals, and confess our sins?

And by that I do not mean merely admitting that we have made one or two mistakes; that is not repentance. I mean the full and frank admission, with all its consequences, that we have clung deliberately and obstinately to ways of life and standards of values which are quite incompatible with national health and international unity; that we recognize at least that we have deliberately chosen and insisted upon the continuation of a particular direction of policy which was incompatible with peace and justice, and of which slums and poverty and war and perpetual fear of one another are the inevitable consequences.

Or do we still cling to the hope that we can abolish those evils without any radical interference with the sort of life and relationships to which we have become accustomed? Or, worse still, whether as individuals or as a nation, are we still seeking to escape responsibility by comparisons between ourselves and others? "At any rate, we are not so bad as those nazis!" I recall an occasion described in St. Luke: "There were present at that season some that told Jesus of the Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. And Jesus answering, said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, Nay; but, except ye repent, ye shall likewise perish. Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay; but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."

No, comparison will not save us. The demand for repentance is the absolute condition if we are, as a nation, to be restored to a state of health. If that is said publicly and it arouses the wrath of a nation, or if people do not like it and walk out of church when

How Shall We Honor Lincoln?

HOW shall we honor Lincoln? Shall we sing
His splendid fame, and build fair shrines of stone
To tell our children of our chosen king?
Yes, let us build these shrines, and thus atone
For all the scorn and hate his people gave;
And let us build his Highway to the sea,
To serve the nation which he came to save;
And let us speak of him continually.
So honor him! But all is vain display
If we forget the work that he began:
To end all slavery, to find a way
To life and happiness for every man.
His voice still speaks: *O set my people free*
From chains of gold, from greed-born tyranny!

THOMAS CURTIS CLARK.

they hear it, if it arouses the antagonism of the governors of this country, then all our talk about a new world order is complete humbug. If that is the mood in which we make our resolutions, then those men and women among whom I live will be cheated for the second time of the peace and justice for which they long.

III

It is a little thing, this repentance; but how much more difficult it is than to do some heroic deed, or, perhaps, to promise, when once the war is over, to give away something that does not really belong to us! If such a repentance is considered weakness, then we have not yet begun to understand either the dignity of man or the secret of power. Without such repentance as a nation, not only do we fail to be at unity within ourselves, but we are incapable of that trust upon which fellowship and unity in international relations can alone be effective. We are incapable, not only of acting together, but of making those sacrifices which are essential for a continuation of the present struggle, and of inspiring that trust in our real purpose which is essential to cooperation abroad.

All talk of a new world order is humbug if Britain insists on such a retention of sovereign rights as makes impossible a real League of Nations and a solution of those vital issues which divide the nations. All talk of a new world order is humbug if Britain insists on a standard of life far above that of other nations, and depending on the pressure we can bring to bear on subject peoples. All talk of a new Britain is humbug so long as the few who dominate the nation do so by reason of vast material possessions, and insist on the continuation, not merely of a higher standard of living (they are often prepared to give way on that point), but on privileges and the power that derives, not from service, but from private property.

The word "charity" has become hateful to people like me, and we must drop it, and learn again to love. For "charity" has come to mean insistence on the retention of privileges, of a man's power to decide what he shall give and what he shall withhold, his right to dispense as he pleases with worldly goods. But love, which involves the change of mind and action that repentance demands, means the surrender, not merely of things, but of oneself; the acknowledgment of equality with one's fellowmen; the surrender of privilege and position. Nothing less than this can bring health to a stricken world. Nothing less than this can bring the nation within striking distance of an understanding of the word "community." "Repent ye, for the Kingdom of God is at hand."

One of the hardest things in life is to bear our troubles in silence. If we can tell them to an understanding friend it eases the load. We are, at least, strengthened by his sympathy. We have the sense that he is in with us. Merely to feel that he knows, is a secret source of power. But if we cannot tell our trouble even to a friend, or if our trouble is one that no one really understands, then we know the full bitterness of life. This was the plight of Job. He was on a very solitary road. His friends tried to help him. But they did not understand. James Reid.

A Pastoral Prayer

By Walter Dudley Cavert

OUR Father God, Thou art never far from any one of us for it is in Thee that we live and move and have our being. Thou hast made us for Thyself and we are restless until we rest in Thee.

We enter into Thy sanctuary seeking rest, but it is not the rest of those who would turn aside from the common struggle of mankind or who would cease from mental and manual toil. We crave the inner rest which is the reward of those who bring their desires into harmony with Thy eternal purposes and commit themselves to the doing of Thy will.

We pray that Thou wilt forgive us for the sinful restlessness which has caused us to wander from Thee. Deceived by the glamor of cheap joys, we have tried to satisfy ourselves with the husks of life, but we still hunger for the bread which Thou alone canst give. Ashamed and homesick, we long for Thy presence. Give us the courage to say, "I will arise and go to my Father." Make us content to abide within the shelter of Thy love and to live within the limits of Thy law.

O Thou who hast made of one blood all the nations of the earth, have mercy upon a world of hatred and strife which has forgotten the things which belong to its peace. Bless the efforts of all who labor to bind up the wounds of war and rebuild the shattered foundations of brotherhood. Hasten the day when man's inhumanity to man shall no longer make countless thousands mourn. Direct the feet of erring men into the ways of righteousness and lead them from the City of Destruction to the Kingdom of God.

Give Thy blessing to the church which seeks to bring restless people back to the moorings from which they have drifted. Grant that the church may become more truly the Body of Christ. Help her to overcome all divisions of race and class and to bind men to each other and to Thee in a fellowship that cannot be broken. Make her a power for truth and goodness, that through her the Savior may at last achieve his purposes for mankind.

Through the richness of Thy grace, supply the deepest needs of each waiting heart. Give us strength adequate to our daily tasks. Guide us by Thy spirit throughout the coming week and all the days of our lives. Whether our paths take us through green pastures and beside still waters, or through dark valleys of disappointment and difficulty, we pray only that we may not lose sight of Thy face and that our souls may find their rest in Thee. Amen.

Bury Those Dead Sermon Titles!

By George Bilby Walker

EVERY sermon title is an invisible salesman for the minister. It takes the soul of the sermon directly to the minds of the multitudes. When people are passing the church on their Sunday adventures, this invisible salesman lets each passerby "feel" and "smell" and "taste" the sermon. This darting demonstration has much to do with the empty pews or the overcrowded churches.

The minister must remember, however, that in past years the cigar-store Indian attracted the people, but, once they were inside, a live-wire clerk had to make the sale. A live sermon title may attract the people to the church, but the minister inside must have a moving message that has a spiritual purpose running through it.

● *Sermon Titles as Salesmen*

A minister today especially needs this alert invisible salesman. The Puritan preachers were never worried about a "full church," for the people were compelled by law to attend the services. Then came the days of the "pulpit-fisted" preachers, who could frighten people into going to church on Sunday by holding them, in their imaginations, over the fiery pits of hell; and they could bring to their ears the cries of agony from the parched lips of the "lost" dead.

Today, this type of preaching does not succeed. No longer can the minister frighten the people into coming to church on Sunday, nor can he compel them to attend by the force of the law. So the sermon title, the minister's invisible salesman, holds a higher degree of importance today than ever before in bringing the Christian message to the hearts and into the homes of the people.

Regardless of the importance placed on the sermon title, however, it should not appear to be a mere fancy phrase that has been hunted by the minister and has been placed upon the bulletin board for its attractiveness. The well tailored salesman attracts attention by his groomed appearance, but he must have salable goods before he can expect to make a sale. The same principle applies to the minister's invisible salesman. It must arrest the attention and arouse curiosity, in order to stick in the mind; but, at the same time, it must touch both the truth and the mood of the message.

● *Active Verbs in Sermon Titles*

There is an art in making sermon titles that stick in the mind. It is an art that any minister can easily acquire by just a little study of how to use the right words. First, however, ignore the high-pressure sales tricks. Put aside all stunts. Forget the trite, tricky sentences.

An effective sermon title usually has action in it. It often contains an active verb. A verb, however, is never a compelling factor, but it does put added life to a title. Many of Roy L. Smith's sermon titles are "alive" without the use of verbs. Such titles as "The Higher Look," "Lost!" "Homesickness of the Soul," "Successful Sin," "A Kingdom Within," "Alibi Addicts," "Sorrow Songs" and "Spite Fences" prove that Dr. Smith has a genius for good titles, even without the use of a verb. Many of his titles, however, such as "Biting the Rescuing Hand," "This Man Can't Be Depressed," "Dredging Our Minds" and "Unloading the Mind" indicate how verbs may be used to enrich sermon titles.

A verb portrays action. The salesman who presses the doorbell briskly is going to get more attention than the one who pushes it gently and apologetically. Action draws attention, for the mind is so constructed that it is drawn to moving things. Give the sermon title a verb that "presses" it briskly. Use powerful, active verbs!

A weak verb in the title of a sermon casts a spirit of defeatism over the message even before it is delivered. What sweeping victories are won by a few simple little active words placed upon the bulletin board outside the church door! People form snap judgments and settle their opinions oftentimes through a sermon's title. Their immediate judgment of a title frequently affects their attitude toward what a minister intends to say. A title like "Dare to be Definite with God!" gives no hint of a weak message. Give life to the sermon title!

● *There Is Magic In Words*

It must be a "talking-for-the-sermon" sign, not a "balking-against-the-sermon" sign. Never let a title put a stutter or a stammer into the sermon. Use bright, interesting, dramatic and forceful words, but let them be simple. Such words as "dialectic," "charism," "charismatic," "sanctified" and "theist" belong to the theologian and the student. The average parishioner has no definite idea of what they mean.

There is magic in the use of words. By the use of cheerful, hopeful and inspiring words, those that make a personal appeal, telegraphic flashes of cheer, hope and aspiration rush across the mind. There is a peaceful suggestion in a title like "God Never Comes Too Late!" What desperate individual passing a church could glance at "Failures Can Be Stepping Stones" without pausing for a moment, and finding himself lifted a little higher from his despair? "Give God a Chance" is a sermon title that has an appeal to the emotions. "Faith Changes Things" is one that encourages a person to come closer to God. Well chosen titles that radiate love and peace and forgiveness have a universal personal appeal. They stamp themselves on the minds of people instantly and remain there indefinitely.

Weigh each word carefully, for often just one word may "make" or "break" an invitation to attend church. In the title "Great Souls Have Great Sorrows" each word has weight, and the passerby is tempted to stop and attend the sacred service.

● *Frivolous Phrases to be Banned*

Never strike for frivolous phrases in a sermon title. They attract attention only to themselves or to the minister, but seldom to the sermon message. Big thoughts may be made simple. Great sermon titles are usually made simple and to the point, for fancy expressions often result in spiritual depressions. Seldom is a soul touched by sermon titles like "Hold On There, Brother Christian," "A Cowboy's Sermon" or "It's Fun to be a Christian!" A minister betrays himself by such titles as these.

Use a modern, streamlined vocabulary in your sermon titles, but never allow yourself to use common, colloquial language. Avoid the archaic, oldfashioned words, for they are timeworn and have had their day. People are tired of seeing them. They are out of date and are no longer inviting. In the use of modern phraseology, however, there is a tendency to use slang, but it is seldom permissible. Slang is "slippery language," yet it can be used occasionally with satisfactory results. A title like "Have Our Youth Gone Haywire?" is an example of how slang may be used effectively.

People live hurried lives today, and they take only conservative glances at a sermon title. Save the people's time by making it simple and clear, yet remember that it is important to

oose and to use the best words, if
e title is to attract the attention of
e passerby. People seldom pause
n enough to decipher such a long-
ded title as "The Only Way to
e Resurrection Life and the Ascen-
o Mount Is the Way of the Cross
n the Grave." A shorter title, one
: could be grasped at a single
ance, would have more effective re-
l s. Quick glances catch the simpler
pressions.

● *Powerful Words, Not Flower-ful*

Every title of a sermon must con-
i powerful words, not "flower-ful"
rds. "Say It With Flowers" is a
d slogan for the florist to use, but
o for the preacher. Flowery words
r flittering words, and they simply
l the mind, leaving it listless and
u .

The core of the sermon should be
rried in the title, expressed in the
veryday language of the masses. It
hould suggest the message of the
mon. People must be able to grasp
h heart of the message quickly and
dily. "Practice the Lost Art of
ditation" is a sermon title that one
see at a glance and know what
means. There is value in every
rd.

Mental pictures of the sermon must
painted by the title. Every word
st have eye-value. Colorful words,
se that have not become dull and
b and commonplace, must find
ir place in the title. They must
ve the mind to the message.

Too many sermon titles are in
or-made fashion. They attract be-
se of their apparent cleverness, but
y fail to suggest. With the fewest
ssible words, they should indicate
subject of the sermon as well as
ract people to the service.

● *Titles That Are Never Forgotten*

Harry Emerson Fosdick knows the
lue of choosing words that grip the
nd. His sermon titles have a per-
nal appeal to the ordinary, every-
y-minded person. "What Christians
ave Done to Christ" is the title of
e of his sermons that quickens one's
riosity. "On Being Civilized to
eath," "The Peril of Privilege,"
When God Lets Us Down," "The
ross and the Ordinary Man" and
iving the Highest a Hearing" are
ner sermon titles which show the
lue Dr. Fosdick places upon the
oice of words in his sermon titles.
ney are easily grasped and never
rgotten.

Yes, the minister has an invisible
lesman in the titles of his sermons.
knocks at the doors of human
arts and minds, and by its simple
ggestion and personal appeal it
her invites the passerby to pause
d worship, or it urges him to hurry
to his Sunday adventures.

Preach the Glad News!

By William Herbert Hudnut, Sr.

William H. Hudnut, Jr., was recently installed as minister to the First Presbyterian Church, Springfield, Ill. The same week his brother, Herbert B. Hudnut, was installed as minister to the Woodward Avenue Presbyterian Church, Detroit, Mich. At both services the father, William H. Hudnut, Sr., who was for many years pastor of First Presbyterian Church, Youngstown, Ohio, delivered the charge to the minister. The Christian Century Pulpit is privileged to give his message (slightly shortened) to its readers. The Editors.

YOU have enjoyed exceptional privileges and opportunities—home, a mother who nurtured and inspired you, education, travel, formative and inspiring experiences in the Old First Church at Youngstown, pastorates and marriage. And now you are installed over another church with a larger parish and a wider responsibility. In this Christian ministry you should have the faith expressed by Grenfell in *The Fisherman Saint:* "My own faith is ever that so marvelous is this human life of ours that (I say it reverently) God himself cannot save the world without us. This for me is infinitely sufficient explanation of why we are here."

* * *

You are to preach the glad news. You are to give your own interpretation. You are to *know,* not because of creed or theology, but because you have gone deeper into your own spiritual experience and inspiration. In preaching we must remember our Lord's question of Pilate, "Sayest thou this of thyself or did others tell it thee of me?"

The ultimate in our preaching is, as John Watson says in his *Bonnie Brier Bush:* "Speak a good word for Jesus Christ." St. Paul, after his experience at Athens, said, "I determined to know nothing but Jesus and him crucified." Ours must be a consuming love for him. Apart from this there is no adequate qualification for the ministry; no culture, erudition or humanitarianism can take its place. "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels and have not love."

* * *

You must be primarily a student of the Bible. Jesus commanded, "Search the Scriptures . . . these are they that testify of me." Here is the revelation of God. Here is inspiration, guidance, comfort, discipline, strength and hope for every man and every time.

You are to be a prophet, not an essayist nor a columnist. You are to preach with conviction, wisdom, passion and emotion. Like your master you are come "not to condemn the world, but that the world through you might be saved.'"

You are to tarry in meditation and prayer until the mighty wind of the Spirit and the winds of the world blow through your study.

* * *

You must also know men. Dr. Fosdick is right when he puts in our creed this article, "I believe in man." Such a faith is the foundation of democracy. It was never more difficult or more necessary than today. We must go out into the highways and hedges, to the poor and underprivileged, not alone to know how the other half lives and to nourish our sympathies, but to discipline our scale of living and incite us to a fuller championship of their cause.

You must expect and demand results of your church services—not only to edify the saints but to change lives. We clergymen are to be "fishers of men." We must set the fashion of religious conversation. The religious life whether at home or abroad is a contagion, it is a person-to-person influence.

The social and evangelistic gospel are not two diverse ministries, but one. We are ordained to make a better world, but we are to make that better world, through making better men and women.

You are to go about doing good, and there is no limit national, racial or social to that "about." Jesus said to the men of his generation, "Whither I go ye cannot come." And when they considered where he could go that they could not follow, they exclaimed, "Will he go unto the "Gentiles?" There can be no "Gentiles" in our world-wide evangelism. We are to heed the call of suffering humanity, to lead our people to the help of the world. We are to train leaders to proclaim the Kingdom of God, to call out from these homes young men and young women who will serve him throughout the world.

But the success of your ministry will depend finally upon your personal life. Do you remind men of Jesus? Do they glorify God in you? Are you leading a life of such purity, peace, joy and victory that, like St. Paul before Agrippa, you can wish your personal experience in Christ upon all men? "Would to God ye were all such as I am!"

Will you, like Jesus, sanctify yourself for their sakes? Your opportunity is to live radiantly, to give a demonstration of Christian life. Dr. Gordon said, "Not even the archangel Gabriel could play a decent tune on a tin whistle."

You are to be a spiritual aristocrat.

• WHO'S WHO in THIS ISSUE •

REV. FRED S. BUSCHMEYER *has been* minister of the Mount Pleasant Congregational Church, Washington, D. C., since February 1939. Earlier pastorates were at Durham and Manchester, N. H. He has been active in college and university student religious work in New England for ten years, and is chairman of the Washington federation of churches' international relations committee and of the Washington committee for relief of war victims through the churches. He is also a member of the Committee on Religious Life in the Nation's Capital. Mr. Buschmeyer received his education at the University of Southern California and Boston U. School of Theology.

After ranching and gold-mining in South Dakota for a number of years Rev. EVERETT W. PALMER went to Dakota Wesleyan University, graduating in 1932. Then followed courses in Drew, where he graduated and later pursued postgraduate studies. For the past six years he has ministered at Trinity Methodist Church, Highland Park, N. J. He has been active in the Social Service Commission of the New Jersey conference.

Graduating from Princeton seminary, Rev. HERBERT BOOTH SMITH was ordained in the Presbyterian ministry in 1909. He held pastorates in Rochester, N. Y., and Knoxville, Tenn., and since 1919 has led the activities of Immanuel Church, Los Angeles, one of the largest Presbyterian churches in this country.

*Graduating from William Jewell Col*lege, Liberty, Mo., Rev. LOWELL R. DITZEN entered the Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Chicago, where he received his B.D. degree in 1936. In 1932 he won first place in the "National Old Line Oratorical Contest," and whil at the Chicago seminary he was awarded a fellowship i Old Testament Hebrew. Mr. Ditzen continued his educa tion at the University of Chicago. Following four years a pastor of the Pullman Presbyterian Church, Chicago, h accepted a call to the South Shore Presbyterian Church i this city, where he still ministers.

Rev. LUCIUS F. REED *has ministered a* the First Congregational Church, Boulder, Colo., for al most twenty-four years. Since 1933 he has also been as sistant professor of religion and chairman of religiou interests in the University of Colorado. Previous pasto rates were in Montpelier, Vt., and Boston. Mr. Ree holds degrees from Doane College and Andover Seminary

Since 1928 Rev. JAMES A. RICHARDS *ha* been minister of the First Church in Oberlin, Ohio, goin to Oberlin from a ten-year pastorate at Winnetka Con gregational Church on Chicago's north shore. Earlie pastorates were in Newport, R. I., and Boston.

Rev. J. B. GROSER *is minister of Chris* Church, in the East End, London. His sermon publishe in this issue was preached in Westminster Abbey in De cember.

Rev. WALTER D. CAVERT *is superin* tendent of Christian education for the Synod of Nev York, under the Board of Christian Education of th Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.

Rev. GEORGE B. WALKER *is associat* pastor of the Denver Heights Methodist Church, Sa Antonio, Texas.

TITLES AND TEXTS — What Pulpit Readers are Preaching About

EDWIN T. BUEHRER, Fellowship Church, Orono, Me. "Mansions and Log Cabins." I Cor. 12:4—"There are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit."

W. T. VANDEVER, First Baptist, Erie, Pa. "Going With the Wind." Eph. 4:14—"Carried about with every wind of doctrine."

CECIL F. WILKINS, Community Methodist, Windsor, Cal. "Prisoners of Hope." Zech. 9:12—"Return to the stronghold, ye prisoners of hope."

W. I. NEWMAN, Bethany Congregational, Los Angeles, Cal. *"Pax Romana* or the Peace of Christ?" Luke 2:14 —. . . on earth peace, good will toward men."

FOR YOUR SERMON AND TEXT

. . . . . .
Title of sermon

. . . . . .
Text used (write out the text)

. . . . . .
Name of minister

. . . . . .
Name of church

. . . . . .
Address

D. W. CHARLTON, Eastport Baptist, Annapolis, Md "Why Nations Fall." Prov. 11:14—"For lack of states manship, a nation sinks."

JAMES M. LICHLITER, Calvery Episcopal, Columbia, Mo "The Years of the Locusts." Joel 2:25—"I will restor unto you the years which the locusts have eaten."

ROY A. BURKHART, First Community Church, Columbus O. "By What Are We Known?" Luke 24:35b—". . he was known of them in the breaking of bread."

HOWARD W. MCKINLEY, First Presbyterian, Beacon N. Y. "No Blackout." Ex. 10:22,23—"There was thic darkness over all the land of Egypt, but the children o Israel had light in their dwellings."

CLARENCE E. MACARTNEY, First Presbyterian, Pittsburgh Pa. "A Sword for Your Battle." I Sam. 21:9—"Ther is none like that; give it to me."

WALTER S. COOK, Christian, Erie, Pa. "Living Courage ously." Psalm 118:6—"Jehovah is on my side; I wil not fear."

FLOYD A. LEGGETT, First Christian, Huntsville, Tex "God's Strange Interlude." Hab. 1:5b—"I will work work in your days, which you will not believe."

M. C. BULLOCK, First Congregational, Ashland, Neb "Your Money's Worth." Isa. 55:2—"Wherefore d ye spend money for that which is not bread?"

THE EDITOR'S PAGE

The Event of the Month

WITH their people caught in the most devastating siege which a civil population has had to undergo in modern times—or any time—more than two hundred of the most influential and representative leaders of British Christianity, headed by the Archbishop of York, sat for days in an unheated hall and considered what the Christian church must do to save civilization after the war. Their government has so far refused to define its peace aims, that is, to envisage the kind of world which will make its present struggle worth while—or perhaps make it unnecessary. But these churchmen, including twenty-three bishops, were unanimous in declaring that the whole economic order must be regenerated; that production must be carried on for the sake of consumption; that production for profit must give way to a system which gives labor an equality with capital in the managerial control of industry; that international trade must recover reverence for the good earth and its resources as the storehouse of divine bounty on which all depend, rather than as a reservoir of potential wealth to be exploited for gain by those who happen to hold a legal title to it; that a genuine interchange of commodities between the ends of the earth must take the place of the present struggle for so-called favorable trade balances. They envisaged a political unification of Europe as a cooperative commonwealth. They saw, too, a new church arising: its worship emancipated from servility to ancient forms and clothed in new forms relevant to modern reality; its will to serve implemented with new techniques of service; its sense of responsibility to society and the state aroused and deepened. What would happen, one wonders, if the British government itself would unroll such a map of the future before the eyes of Britain's enemies?

British Churchmen See New World

The Book of the Month

THESE SHARED HIS CROSS. *By Edwin McNeill Poteat. Harpers, $1.75.*

WE SHALL all be wanting at least one book—I hope many will want more—to fertilize our minds and deepen our devotion during the Lenten season, not now far away. Dr. Poteat has written a book which will do just this. It is a dramatic interpretation of the events which took place in the restricted circle of which the Cross was a center. What I would call its *dramatis personae* include the scourger, Simon of Cyrene, the Lamenting Women, the Malefactors, Joseph and Nicodemus, the Crowd that passed by, the Executioner—these shared the Cross of Jesus. Touched by Dr. Poteat's vivid imagination, the figures take on fascinating reality, embody characteristics which—and this is the genius of the book—are the outstanding realities in the present world situation. Dr. Poteat sets the Place of the Skull in the very midst of today's world scene. When you preach a Lenten sermon, you will face a congregation preoccupied with war. Your people will be wondering what the Cross has to do with this war. Dr. Poteat will help you to tell them, and he will do it with words that eat away all sentimentalism about the Cross and the faithless misgiving, induced by the war, that the Cross has any relevancy in the kind of world in which we live. This Christian pastor comes nearer, I believe, to showing us the meaning of the Cross than any writer who has borne witness to it in my time. This book is invaluable for Lent—and for life. It carries in flaming words the message of the everlasting gospel.

A Thought for the Month

AN ETHICAL and religious distinction which I formulated and expressed some years ago, seems to me to be of great importance just now. It is the distinction between the duty of the Christian church as a corporate community and the duty of the individual Christian. Whatever may be the decision of the Christian—whether to engage in war or to refuse to do so—the Christian *church* has only one course open to it: it must condemn war and refuse to be drawn into any particular war by blessing the banners of one side in the conflict. For many this is a difficult distinction to grasp. I find it, however, becoming current in Christian writing on this subject. Dr. F. Ernest Johnson states it graphically in his fine book, *The Social Gospel Re-examined.* He says the house of worship must be "totally excluded from the war zone." Careful thought will, I believe, confirm the validity of this distinction between the corporate duty of the church and the individual duty of the Christian. The Christian, being also a member of the state, has obligations requiring him to make decisions in terms of his loyalty to the state. He may decide to fight or he may refuse to fight. In either case his decision, even when his motivation is derived from the teaching of the church, is an expression of his loyalty to the state. But the church has no such obligation to the state. It is not a citizen of the state, nor is it dependent upon the state. A war—any war—spells the failure of the divine purpose for which the church exists, namely, to spread the love of God among men and the love of men for one another. For the church to bless a war is to bless its own failure to realize the divine purpose. Room must be made at its altars for those who fight and those who refuse to fight—and for those who fight on both sides of the conflict. "The shrine of the God of Nations," as Dr. Johnson puts it, "must be kept inviolate."

The Christian, the Church and War

Charles Clayton Morrison

FACES ABOUT THE CROSS

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